Getting Started with Searching

**Define your topic as a question**

What is the effectiveness of antibiotic treatment for respiratory tract infections in children?

**Use the PICO format**

- **Patient** = children with respiratory tract infections
- **Intervention** = antibiotics
- **Comparison** = none
- **Outcome** = identify best treatment

**Choose the most appropriate database**

Go to the CAHS Library website

http://cahslibrary.health.wa.gov.au

Click **Databases** to see available databases

**Note**: consider other resources on the Library website, such as e-books, clinical guidelines, evidence-based resources

**Break your search question into main concepts**

eg. search 1 = respiratory tract infections, search 2 = antibiotics

**Use subject headings whenever possible**

Subject headings will provide a more precise search strategy and reduce the number of irrelevant results
Combine concepts using AND
e.g. search 1 AND search 2
respiratory tract infections AND antibiotics. This retrieves articles with both search terms

Combine concepts using OR
eg. search 3 OR search 4
measles vaccine OR rubella vaccine. This retrieves articles with either or both search terms

Use limits to refine your search
eg. English language, publication year, age group (e.g. child)

Save your search
Consider saving your search strategy so you can run your search later or create an alert that sends search results to your mailbox each time a new article on your topic is added to the database

Find full text articles
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Isn’t Google quicker?
Google and Google Scholar only search the words you enter, while databases allow you to use subject headings and limits to focus your search and get more relevant results. A Google search may seem quicker but a database search is usually more efficient

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